ELEANORA:

FROM THE

SORROWS OF WERTER.

A TALE.

E certo ogni mio ſtudio in quel temp'era
Pur di Sfozare il doloroſo core
In qualche modo, non d'acquiſtar fama.

PETRARC.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

THE following letters were tranſmitted to me from a perſon who met with them by chance. I have obſerved in them an excellent ſtrain of morality, which is conveyed in an eaſy and unaffected manner, and I offer them to the public eye, not as a *chef d'œuvre*, but as the genuine ſentiments of a virtuous and uncorrupt heart, under the influence of a paſſion which was as permanent as it was ſincere. I truſt there will be nothing found in them which can tend to corrupt either manners or morals—for in that caſe I ſhould hold myſelf accountable

countable for having been inſtrumental in publiſhing what would have ſo bad an effect in general. On the contrary, the principles diffuſed throughout, and the particular ones reſpecting ſuicide, will, I imagine, be well received by thoſe who are enemies to ſelf-murder.

It is not, however, my deſign to plead in their favor—ſuch as they are, I give them to the Public; who are too good judges to be biaſſed by what I ſhould ſay, either for or againſt them, and who will receive them according to their merit.

ELEANORA.

LETTER I.

May the 19th, 1770.

IT is then true Maria!—My ſenſations correſpond too well with your deſcription, to leave room for even a doubt—fool that I was not to perceive this before—to perceive it when attention, preciſion, and care, might have availed me ſomething—preciſion and care;—they are incompatible with the movements of my heart—they are uſeleſs againſt the ſentiments—the expreſſions of Werter.——When Werter

ſpeaks—when he throws his arm over the chair in which he has placed Julia—when his eyes are fixed on hers, and he is explaining to her the exceſs of his feelings, and deſcribing the warmth with which he enters into every thing that concerns her.—I liſten to him and I loſe myſelf—I forget all but Werter.—It is him only who engroſſes every idea.—I am at a diſtance from them—they do not ſee me.—I weep, I claſp my hands together and breathe a fervent prayer for his happineſs. I riſe—walk about the room: he is not diſturbed by my moving—ſome flowers are on the table, he ſelects his favorites and offers them to my ſiſter—ſhe places them in her boſom, inſenſibly I find myſelf at

the

the table, I chuſe the ſame ſort of flowers he has given Julia—I carefully arrange the lily of the valley on the left ſide of the roſebud, exactly as he had done, and I fix them next my heart—I take up a book, and whilſt he ſuppoſes I am reading, or rather whilſt he does not ſuppoſe at all about me, I am attentively watching him. If by accident in the courſe of the day he addreſſes a few words to me, I aſſume an air of indifference, and veil what I would ſay to him, with the coldeſt, the moſt inſipid language I can find, that he may not ſuſpect me—How unneceſſary that—He who thinks but of Julia, that he ſhould even know I anſwer him.—Council me Maria, tell me a thouſand times how

much I am in the wrong—perſuade me to quit this ſcene, this enchanting ſcene which contributes hourly to my wretchedneſs—Who can withſtand your eloquence? Ah! thoſe only who have a Werter to poiſe againſt it.

LETTER II.

May the 25th.

"IF ſhe loves him"—how is it poſſible that ſhe ſhould reſiſt it?—But do you wiſh me to anſwer from my own obſervations—if ſo—ſhe does not.—She liſtens to him with complacency—ſhe receives his attentions—ſhe combats his arguments with ſtrength of reaſon, even with

with philoſophy, and when he gives up the point to her, inſtead of reſigning the victory, of diſclaiming any ſuperiority over him, ſhe ſmiles, and tells him he muſt moderate his ardour, that his paſſions are too ſtrong—that with his ſentiments he never can be happy.—How can ſhe tell him that?—If I were *ſure* of it he ſhould not know it.

He will propoſe a thouſand plans to her—ſhe will take them up categorically and refute them one by one, paſſing them over as you would beads that you thread upon a ſtring—will prove to him how fallacious his ſchemes are—ſchemes which were they propoſed to me. . . . . The other day whilſt he was reading the moſt deſcriptive ſcene imagi-

nable, and which he was embelliſhing by now and then adding his opinion on the ſubject; ſhe recollected that ſhe had not ſent ſome broth to a poor woman in the neighbourhood which ſhe had promiſed, and flew out of the room that ſhe might get it in time for her dinner.—This was right—it was praiſe-worthy—but was it *love?*——The moment the door cloſed after her, Werter threw himſelf on the Sopha—reclined his head—ſhut his eyes—and hung his arm over the ſide, with his thumb in the book, that he might not, by loſing the page, make her wait for the ſtory on her return.—I moved to the chair he had quitted, leaned my elbows on the table, and covered my face with my hands,

hands, and the tears which I could not reſtrain paſſed plentifully thro' my fingers—I cannot expreſs the ſenſations I felt whilſt we were ſo ſituated.—What extreme indifference!—he hates me, ſaid I to myſelf, and I am miſerable—he will not even ſpeak when Julia is abſent. But how dare I complain—is he not the lover of Julia, and can I be wretched whilſt he is happy.———I was awakened from my revery by the ſound of—" Eleonora!"——pronounced in ſuch a tone of voice that Werter only could expreſs—I raiſed my head and beheld him in the attitude of enquiry—" You are not well" ſaid he, " or you are not happy, and why ſhould you conceal your griefs from me,

who would die to ſerve my Julia's ſiſter."—You know not the tones of Werter's voice—but you may form an idea of them, for they are in perfect uniſon with every heart of ſenſibility, and the impreſſion they make can never be forgotten.—I recovered myſelf ſufficiently to thank him for his attention, and aſſure him that I could not know a ſorrow whilſt he and Julia were happy—that the book he had choſen was not calculated to inſpire mirth, and he could not wonder at my being affected at the relation of a diſtreſs ſo well deſcribed and ſo pathetically delivered.—He ſeemed ſcarcely to believe my excuſe—but roſe—" Where is our dear Julia," ſaid he, " you wiſh

to

to hear the concluſion Ellen, and I muſt not finiſh it till Julia returns."—At the moment the amiable girl entered—" My ſiſter in tears! but I know the cauſe—her gentle heart could not be unmoved at ſuch a ſcene, and I was obliged to fly for it."—He finiſhed his ſtory, and ſince that he has ſeveral times ſpoken to me.—I began this with an intent to anſwer your queſtion.—Maria, if I have not made you underſtand that Julia is not in love with Werter—I fear you will determine Eleanora is.

LET.

LETTER III.

May the 30th.

STILL this Werter!—but how ſhould it be otherwiſe? Accuſtomed from my infancy to ſee him continually—to liſten to, and admire him—he is now become my darling theme—Ah! Maria, if you knew him—if you could but be a witneſs to the warmth, the energy he gives even to trifles. How intereſting does he not make them appear—my God! that my heart ſhould be ſo capable of underſtanding him.—A thouſand times do I wiſh myſelf inſenſible.—Annihilation would be preferable to what I now ſuffer.—It is not my fault that I adore him—no

—no—I am convinced it is involuntary. How many times have I wiſhed that I did not exiſt—how ardently—how fervently have I prayed for death.—If Werter loved me—if I could make him happy. Maria, what an idea! I dare not indulge it.—Alas! I know no happineſs—deſerted and forlorn I wander round theſe delightful gardens—I ſeek the moſt ſolitary paths, and there I watch the ſilver moon gliding thro' the fine trees which ſpread their arms to form a ſhade—And I lament that beautiful as theſe ſcenes are—they have no joys for me.

LETTER IV.

June the 11th.

JULIA is not well, and I ſcarcely ever leave her chamber.—Is it not ſtrange, my Maria, that loving Werter as I do, my affection for Julia is not dimiſhed?—How is it poſſible that I can feel ſo many tender ſenſations for my rival—for my rival?—It is not ſo—Julia would not, if ſhe knew it, contribute to my wretchedneſs. And if Werter was not attached to Julia, perhaps he would not obſerve me. But the dear girl has been ill theſe ten days paſt—ſhe alters viſibly, and I would ſacrifice my life to ſave hers. —When Werter enters her room, I throw myſelf upon the chair by her bedſide,

bedſide, and I hide my face. I will not even liſten to the ſounds of his voice.—If you could ſee him, Maria! —At times he is almoſt petrified—and again he is wild with deſpair—He flies to me for comfort—to me —who can only weep and join my prayers to his.—Oh thou Almighty Being, who knoweſt our hearts, and who ſee'ſt with what purity, with what ſincerity I make my vows, reſtore her to our ſupplications—deſtroy not at once thy ſervants, but pity and preſerve them.

LETTER V.

June the 14th.

WERTER is ſitting by me, Julia is better, and it has made Werter quite another Being. He

He hears what is ſaid to him—he even makes a rational anſwer, and he paſſes whole hours by my ſide to tell me how happy he his. Is it poſſible not to ſhare his tranſports? And yet, Maria, I feel that I am become like a wretched man who is doomed to carry a heavy burthen to a certain diſtance. Wearied and diſconſolate he treads the path that is to bring him to his deſtination.—All around him are Beings who are dancing over the green, and amuſing themſelves by gathering flowers. They addreſs themſelves to him—they try to induce him to join in their gaiety——He looks at them and ſighs———" Ah, if I make one of their party, will it not prolong my miſery?—this load muſt be ſuſtained—the weight of it

cannot

cannot be put off till I ceaſe to exiſt:—And is it for me to dance and ſing?—Happy Beings, continue your ſports—and let me purſue my way. Rather, if it be poſſible, add to my burthen that I may ſink beneath its force and be the ſooner cruſhed."

LETTER VI.

June the 22d.

JULIA—is dead!—my God! what ſenſations does that create—Maria, I have loſt every thing that is dear to me—and yet Werter lives—I thought that in Werter's indifference, I had ſuffered every evil of this world.—Alas! how deep, how poignant is my woe. I had told you

you ſhe was recovering, and for a few days ſhe mended faſt—that idea adds now to my miſery. Whilſt we were pluming ourſelves on her returning health—even whilſt we were rejoicing around her—ſhe died. She felt herſelf indiſpoſed in the morning, and had removed from the ſopha to her bed, imagining ſhe ſhould reſt. But ſhe did not cloſe her eyes—and deſired I would read to her. I obſerved her reſtleſs and uneaſy, and perſuaded her to let me ſend for Goireè, who attended her. He came—and fancied he ſhould inſtantly relieve her. She ſwallowed his preſcription, and, to make us happy, called herſelf better. At length ſhe aſked for Werter—he arrived, and gently putting aſide the curtain,

curtain, he ſat down by her.——
" My friend," ſhe ſaid, " I have
" ſent for you—you have been my
" conſtant attendant during my
" illneſs—deſert me not now—now
" that I ſhall ſo ſhortly leave
" you."—" Deſert you !——leave
" me !—what is it you ſay, my
" Julia ?"—" Yes, Werter, I am
" going to leave you. I feel that the
" end of my exiſtence is approach-
" ing.—Do not ſtart,—I am calm ;
" —I am reſigned. In Heaven my
" friend we ſhall meet, and we ſhall
" there enjoy that felicity ſo ſupe-
" rior to what this world could
" have afforded us. In me you
" will loſe a friend, who loved you
" tenderly, and who I know is very
" dear to you :—but you have for-
" titude, Werter ;—you have every

" quality that can exalt the ſoul. " Exert them then—exert them in " compaſſion to yourſelf, and in " pity to my poor ſorrowing Elea- " nora; protect. . . ." But ſpare me, Maria—I cannot continue a ſcene which almoſt burſt my heart:— My God!—the ſiſter of my ſoul!. ——expired—the friend of my heart! the tender, the indulgent monitreſs!—Do not attempt to comfort me—it is impoſſible— every thing is dark before me. I ſhut myſelf up—I will not ſee any one—and I indulge in all the bitterneſs of grief.

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LETTER VII.

July the 15th.

WHAT an evening have I paſſed!—Werter has been here. He would ſee me—in an inſtant he threw open the door, and he was at my feet. Together we wept over our common misfortune—together we lamented our irreparable loſs.—My dear friend, I felt, even at that moment—when every paſſion was blended—when they were all as it were called forth at once—I felt that nothing could reſtore me to my former tranquillity.—I could not diſguiſe my grief—much as it diſtreſſed Werter—I indulged it to the full. Julia loved me, ſhe was in-

tereſted for me, ſhe was my guide; my faithful, my indulgent friend. Who can reſtore to me the happy hours we have ſpent when her elegant and judicious obſervations have enlarged my mind, and formed my manners—when ſhe taught me to diſtinguiſh between the real and the apparent good.

How vain are my lamentations—my regret how laſting! I am overcome by this melancholy event. And if at any time I collect my ſcattered ſenſes, they ſerve only to convince me the more of the inſufficiency of human happineſs. Is there nothing for me but ſorrow and diſtreſs? Ah! then; when I fancied my miſery at its height—even then, it was augmented. Is not this

this a juſt puniſhment? Maria, I was wrapt up in one idea, it had taken poſſeſſion of me, I was wholly engroſſed by it—and now I find that my heart is large enough to admit a double weight of woe—when will it be at peace?

LETTER VIII.

July the 20th.

THIS day—for the firſt time ſince I loſt my Julia—I ventured out to walk. How has every tree, every flower recalled her to my memory—I have traced her along every path—and her favorite ſeat—it was ſome time before I could command myſelf to turn into the

walk in which it ſtands. The moment I reached it, I threw myſelf on my knees, and leaning my head on the bench, gave a free vent to my tears. The jaſmine that ſurrounds it is—from want of attention lately—grown luxuriant: with what emotions did I gather ſome of the bloſſoms. They were very dear to her. Werter had planted the tree, and Julia never failed to viſit it every evening.

How many happy hours have we paſſed in this bower—hours never to be recalled—with what winged ſpeed ye flew!—and now every leaf ſpoke to my heart—The diſpoſition of the boughs, which hung neglected, or only caught up here and there by the tendrils of a vine which had

had made its way through the lattice —had ſomething ſo mournful, ſo pathetically touching in their appearance, that I could not withſtand the ſenſations they raiſed in me.— I was overpowered by the weight of my affliction—why is it that ſorrow takes ſuch ſtrong hold upon me? Is calamity to be my guide through life?—I am not naturally of a melancholy turn; there was a time when chearfulneſs danced before me —Hope was on my right hand and Contentment on my left. I gave myſelf up to their protection—we ruſhed giddily after our conductreſs.—Through what flowery paths ſhe led us! whatever we ſaw was worthy of our attention, every trifle amuſed us. At the altar of Religi-

on we bowed our heads, our hearts hailed her as our ſuperior patroneſs —we offered gratefully our vows at her ſhrine. She received our ſacrifices, and ſmiled on us with that benignity which can exalt the human heart to ſuch a pitch of ſublimity. My friend, we met with Love; —he ſeduced Chearfulneſs from us, and he ſupplied her place;—at firſt we ſcarcely perceived the change; but we had not wandered long, when the boy grew captious. —Hope trembled and turned pale. She ſaw, and warned me of my danger: Love ſtruck at her, and ſhe fled. Contentment vaniſhed. I would have followed, but with artful, with flowery bands he detained me. How ſoft, how gentle, he was then

then to me;—but ſoon, what a tyrant did he become! What would I not have given to have broken my fetters!—yet now—that Deſpair has driven him from my heart—am I more at eaſe?—I am convinced we know not what is beſt for us, and our part is only to ſubmit with reſignation to the events which the Moſt High ſhall judge we are capable of ſupporting.

LETTER IX.

July the 29th.

I Often wonder how it is, that I ſupport this miſerable exiſtence. —Agitated—tormented—weary of every thing—I have not a ray of comfort

comfort—not a ſpark to chear me on my way. I ſicken at ſociety: here are ſeveral very worthy people who viſit me—as they ſay—to prevent my being melancholy. How little they know of me, they ſit whole hours by my ſide, and form a converſation of their own on a thouſand indifferent ſubjects, not one of which, perhaps, I hear. A yes, or no—at random—is all I am able to offer them: and when, as it frequently happens, I place them exactly where they ſhould not be, they look wiſely at each other, and, with a ſhake of the head, exclaim "that I think too much."—Werter came in laſt night whilſt I was ſurrounded with a ſet of theſe inſenſibles. His eyes were ſwoln, and his countenance

countenance pale and languid—what expreſſion was there in his look—he took my hand but did not ſpeak.—I honored him for it—methought I would not have had him utter a ſyllable whilſt they ſtaid. He walked to the window—drew out his handkerchief, and left the room. Maria, you will underſtand this—as for me—I could not ſupport it, my tears flowed apace, and my good-natured companions—who found their preſence was of no uſe—took their leave. Werter returned—he did not attempt to reſtrain my ſorrow by any of thoſe hacknied proverbs which every body repeats at will, bur he ſoothed me with thoſe elegant expreſſions of tenderneſs ſo peculiar to himſelf. It would not

do,

do, Maria.—I feel that I ſhall never conquer the woe that oppreſſes me. It is not now a rapid torrent of affliction which overwhelms me, it is a ſmall, ſtill ſtream of ſorrow, which ſilently, and without alarm, wears its own channel and deepens as it flows. Not even Werter can charm—I liſtened to him, and my heart gratefully acknowledged his attentions—he ſeemed to forget his own griefs, that he might leſſen mine. The two hours he ſpent with me, moved on; they did not fly as they were want to do in happier times, when I never heard his foot-ſtep without emotion, nor parted from him but with ſo much regret. —And is it poſſible we ſhould ſo ſoon change? change!—I do not like

like that word—it cannot be—my heart—my ideas—my ſentiments with regard to Werter changed!—My dear friend help me to unravel this. Were my affections ſo lightly placed? Is Werter an object to inſpire a tranſient paſſion?—I bewilder myſelf in endeavouring to account for what I now feel. Can it be that Werter ſhould ever be indifferent to me?

LETTER X.

Auguſt the 6th.

WHAT is it you tell me?—that I love Werter; that I adore him: but that it is the common caprice of human nature to prize

prize a bleſſing leſs when attainable, than when the apparent impoſſibility puts it out of our reach.—Maria, I ſhould hate myſelf if this were true. —But you ſay, " Ellen, you are not changed, it is perhaps that the greater evil ſwallows up the leſs— in the preſent violence of your affliction, for the loſs of Julia, you think not of the paſſion, which before conſumed you, for Werter— have patience, and a little time will prove this to you."—My dear friend, is it for me then to wait for the return of what has given me ſo much uneaſineſs? rather let me embrace the preſent trouble—I know the extent of that—but let me confeſs to you, the calm I now feel with regard to Werter—is not a happy one—

one——I am continually reſtleſs, anxious: without wiſhing to ſee him, I am always recollecting ſomething I ſhould have ſaid to him when I ſaw him laſt, but when he comes in I am compoſed, I obſerve every thing he ſays, and I am ſorry when the time arrives that we are to part. But theſe are not the ſenſations I before experienced.—The other evening, when he roſe, I looked at my watch, and threw my eyes on a violet in my work which was not above half finiſhed—" I thank you, my dear Eleanora," ſaid he, " you permit me to ſtay till your flower is done." " What pity," I returned, " that there is not a bunch of flowers." Werter preſſed my hand—and inſtantly ruſhed out

of

of the room. I looked after him, but he was gone: and he returned no more that night.—Why was this?—Maria, I ſometimes think—but no:—perhaps I reminded him of Julia.—

This morning, when he looked in, the work was ſtill unfiniſhed. He ſtooped down—looked tenderly on the flower, and kiſſed it. "Dear violet," I whiſpered, "the choiceſt ſhades ſhall be mingled in your bloſſom, and your leaves ſhall never fade—I will finiſh you with the niceſt care, and from this inſtant your lovely originals ſhall adorn my boſom."—From what trifles, my Maria, do we compoſe our happieſt moments. Never, never, can I forget the expreſſion of Werter's counte-

countenance—ſurely he did not hear me—and yet, if he had; Heaven knows how innocently I meant it. And he received it ſo. There was ſo much goodneſs, ſuch gentle compaſſion in his fine eyes as he bent them on me—they ſeemed to ſay, "Ellen, you are a good girl, and I love you for the gentleneſs I find in you."—He propoſed our walking—why did I carefully avoid the garden? Maria, I am aſhamed to ſay why—and to puniſh myſelf for the idea, on my return I led him to the ſeat I ſo lately deſcribed to you. —We entered the arbour together—every tender remembrance of my Julia was recalled—they ruſhed with all their force at once upon me: and again I paid a tribute of tears to

her memory.—Werter turned his eyes to Heaven, he raiſed his hands, and uttered a fervent ejaculation—It was at once a tender recollection of Julia, and a prayer of preſervation for me. Judge of my feelings—I could not ſpeak—a deep ſigh burſt from my heart—for ſome minutes we continued ſilent, but it was a ſilence ſo eloquent—on the part of Werter it ſpoke more than the moſt elaborate ſpeech could have expreſſed—How can I be ſo fooliſh? let me not deceive myſelf—tell me that this tenderneſs ſo elegant—ſo moving, is natural to him.—That it is not to me it is directed; or rather—if it is to me—it is only from motives of the pureſt friendſhip—of the ſofteſt compaſſion. He ſees my ſufferings,

and

and by a manner at once intereſting and engaging he tries to alleviate my ſorrows. But he knows not—I am ſure he does not ſuſpect, how much I feel for him—and what an addition to my woe will it be, if the deluſive veil, which is now ſpread around me, is to be torn away, and I be left—forlorn—diſoppointed—and deceived.

LETTER XI.

Auguſt the 24th.

IT cannot be!—I am not deceived—too often have I watched Werter and Julia, to be now a ſtranger to his meaning. Whole days

does he paſs near me—he reads the moſt affecting paſſages—he calls forth every tender ſenſation—and whilſt my heart is ſwelling in my boſom, he ſtops—gazes attentively at me—preſſes my hand to his lips—then breathes out my name in a tone that is not to be miſtaken—and yet, Maria, this does not make me happy. What ſituations—what tender remembrances does it not recall—in every word he utters I trace his accents to Julia—to Julia, my beloved ſiſter—ſo lately loſt, and ſo ſincerely lamented.—Ah Werter! is it then poſſible that your attentions are ſo ſoon transferred—the object of your warmeſt affections is no more—but can you change them? —Can Eleanora ſo ſoon ſupply the

place

place of Julia?—And is ſhe not as deeply engraven on your heart as when—in other times—ſhe lived and moved, and ſhared your mirth or ſorrows.—No—he cannot be ſo quickly altered—Werter cannot have already forgotten the ſentiments ſhe imparted to him—the truths—the wiſdom—the eloquence that flowed from her tongue—the charms of her perſon, and the virtues of her mind—and, remembering them, can he ever love another?—How eaſily are we led away by happy proſpects of our own creating.—We follow the enchanting viſion till—tired and exhauſted—too late we find the deluſion: And it is not till we are on all ſides ſurrounded by rocks and precipices that we diſ-

cover our error.—I will go then, my friend—I will fly this ſpot, for many reaſons dear to me, but where I have been ſo vaſt a ſufferer. Every path I tread here is faſcinating. Like the wiles of the magicians, they enſlave my ſoul, and though my reaſon would fain perſuade me of my danger, yet is the enchantment ſo ſtrong, that nothing but the mirrors of Truth, held up by the hands of Virtue, can free me from their power—Oh! Nature how powerful are thy dictates. How cruel, how unjuſt are the laws of Cuſtom.—Tyrannic are her edicts, and they muſt be obeyed.—I bow then before them—I will not ſee Werter——to-morrow, before he comes, I ſhall be far from hence; I will

will go to where my Aunt has often entreated me to come. There, in the midſt of diſſipation and amuſement, may I forget what now lies ſo near my heart—it is a recipe I have often heard of but never tried.—Abſence—the hurry of a town life and continual diſſipation.—I fear, I fear Maria they will not do—if I know myſelf—I think they will not——yet will I purſue my plan. What would you ſay to a child who was ill—who was dying with a diſeaſe that was momentarily preying upon it, and ſapping the foundation of its exiſtence, and yet obſtinately perſiſted in refuſing every ſuccour, every relief that was offered. —Hitherto I have been that child! —but I will exert myſelf!—yes, by

an effort of my own I will voluntarily quit this ſcene:—to-morrow I will go. But how ſhall I diſguiſe my intentions?——When Werter comes this evening—what ſhall I ſay to him—will it not be unkind—ungenerous to conceal them from him:—from him, who ſo tenderly,—ſo affectionately ſupported my drooping ſpirits, and adminiſtered the balm of heavenly pity to my aching heart?—Yet is he not himſelf the origin of all my woes? and how can a remedy be effectual that does not begin by removing the cauſe of the diſeaſe?—it is then determined.—*I will go.*

LET.

LETTER XII.

September the 8th,

WHAT a change have I experienced. A change of ſituation—of life—of manners—of every thing but ideas: and thoſe, Maria, are what I moſt wiſh changed. Well, let us proceed—already I have been here a fortnight, and in all that time have I not found one object to intereſt—to charm me. The people who inceſſantly viſit here, are a happy ſet of unthinking beings, who merrily ſpeed away the preſent hour, and laugh (ſay they) that they may not do worſe.—Maria, there is a world of intelligence in that—though, to do them juſtice, their

their idea went no farther, I am certain, than the mere filling up the ſentence, and laughing at the end of it, to convince you of what they meant. But I will obſerve it—it ſhall be a leſſon for me, and I will laugh too:—nor can I in this place be at a loſs for ſubjects—my Aunt, who is an amiable, excellent woman, is—by her ſtation here—ſo ſituated that her doors are ever open to ſtrangers, and her table is frequented by perſons of the firſt faſhion—in vain I ſeek amongſt them for a Werter—it is not in crouded cities, or at the manſions of the great, that noble and generous minds diſplay themſelves. How ſeldom here does the eye explain what is paſſing in the breaſt, nor dares the tongue expreſs

preſs the opinion the mind forms of the ſurrounding multitude.—Truly may they call this a life of diſſipation—from morn to night a continual round of engagements. The ſame people are hourly employed in varying their amuſements, which they contrive to do by meeting alternately at their own houſes, or the places of public entertainment—How new this to you—to me it was ſo for the firſt week, but now I am more reconciled to their cuſtoms, and can hear with tolerable patience the ſame routine of queſtions repeated to every freſh face that makes its appearance:—nay, I have three times anſwered the ſame enquiries to the ſame perſon. Here is a good little woman who

makes

makes it her buſineſs to arrange on the Monday morning all her converſation for the enſuing week—for the day I ſhould have ſaid, ſince the ſeven are determined by the firſt—for every hour ſhe fixes ſuch a ſubject—and I have known her to break out in a pious ejaculation, whilſt I was anſwering her laſt queſtion, about a pointed ruffle—only becauſe, in the intermediate time, the clock had ſtruck one. This woman gives me very little trouble—by Wedneſday I am prepared for her—I fall in with her way, and ſhe finds me one of her eaſieſt jargoniſts. Not ſo the fat Dutcheſs of B——; willing to convince me of her underſtanding—ſhe quotes for ever from the moſt abſtruſe books extant—

extant—and no longer ago than yeſterday, ſhe was giving me a long lecture on philoſopy, when, unfortunately for her, at the inſtant the young Count of Holſtein paſſed by, and ſhe gave him ſuch a glance as immediately convinced me it was not ſtoiciſm ſhe ſtudied.—Madame de V—— is beautiful as an angel, but ſhe has ſo ſteady a determination not to diſcompoſe her features by a ſingle turn of expreſſion, that it is ſome time before you can diſcover whether it is a wooden, or a living doll, you ſpeak to—her mechanical curt'ſeys would confirm you in the firſt ſuſpicion; but I watched her yeſterday for ten minutes, and was happily at laſt aſſured of her exiſtence by a faint ſcream—

becauſe

becauſe Louiſa's tame canary bird flew acroſs the room, which ſo alarmed her that ſhe preſently fainted—though Miſs de L——, who ſat next to me, inſiſted it was only to diſplay her fine form—as reclined in the arms of the Chevalier F——, who was luckily near enough to ſupport her.—As for the men, Maria, they have but one language—that of love—Of love!—how dare they profane the ſacred name. Yet you will ſee them addreſſing every woman in turn, and offering each the ſame homage. They have indeed the art to vary their ſtile, and dreſs it up either in ſtudied ſimplicity—or pompous declamation—as their penetration leads them to diſcover the taſte of the lady they apply it to.—

to.—The Count of Holſtein is at preſent my moſt formidable hero at this amuſement. He is ever at my ſide—he " lives but for me"—he " adores me," and a thouſand times a day he wiſhes I would command him to ſignalize himſelf in any—almoſt incredible exploit, that he may have an opportunity of convincing me how much he is devoted to my ſervice.—" I am ſorry, my Lord, you are ſo miſtaken in me—I would not even have my name known, and to aſſure you of the ſincerity of what I ſay, the only favor I beg of you—is to ceaſe thoſe unmerited compliments you laviſh on me—I am not ambitious of ſervices which —as they would be performed with ſo much eclat—would expoſe me to

the

the envy and malevolence of every female. Conſider, my Lord, in what you would involve me, and ſpare an ignorant, who really has not genius enough to admire your poetic flights of fancy."—" My charming Eleanora, with what elegant refinement you convince me of the impropriety of my addreſs—you delight not in tumults—the buſtle of active life is more than your delicate frame could ſupport. But ſuffer me to admire your taſte, and to aſſure you, that the charms of retirment have ever been my ruling paſſion, but unfortunately——my rank in life—and my early entrance into the army has thrown me into a ſituation and a turn of converſation that I cannot eaſily diſengage

gage myſelf from. Let me, I entreat you, ſtudy your taſte—your ſtyle—your manners—and happy ſhall I be if a courſe of the moſt reſpectful attentions may in time induce you to liſten to what is neareſt my heart."—" A diſſertation on the beauties of an embroidered waiſtcoat. I hope, my Lord, you will find me there, not ſo great a novice as I am on the ſubject of love—a ruſtic, you know, may be allowed to underſtand the amuſements of a retired life."—" Unkind Eleanora—if you knew". . . . . " No more, my Lord—you will exhauſt your ſubject. I beg of you to remember there are other women in the room—who already condemn me

for having engroſſed ſo much of your attention.—Adieu."

What think you, Maria, of a modern converſation? Ah! how unlike..... but I will not allow myſelf a ſingle recollection. No—whilſt I ſtay here I will enter—and that furiouſly—into every thing the place affords. I will be as giddy as the giddieſt, and rattle with the moſt lively—there ſhall be nothing wanting to complete my cure—condemn me not if I do not ſucceed, ſince every effort ſhall be tried. But is this likely to advance it? The contraſt is too ſtriking—Do you know I am almoſt pleaſed that in this croud I have not found any who reſemble Werter. It is an honor to him to ſtand alone

—and

—and alone in the univerſe he is. How ſuperior is his underſtanding —how exalted his turn of thought —his ſentiments how noble, and what force of expreſſion. A ſingle ſentence of his would ſuffice for the ſubject of a whole day here. His genius ſoars above the trifles that occupy other mens moſt ſerious attention—it is the mind he prizes—it is to that he addreſſes himſelf, and what ſatisfaction beams in eyes when he finds himſelf underſtood. I have ſeen him tranſported with enthuſiaſtic rapture when he has been explaining the attributes of the Deity—he was more than mortal—the fire of his imagination communicated itſelf to my heart, and I liſtened with the devotion of an

adoring ſpirit.—I have ſeen Pleaſure and Contentment play around him whilſt he was deſcribing the touching—the ſimple—duties of a life of innocence and peace.—When he has pointed out the cottager, ſurrounded by his family, enjoying with gratitude the bleſſings of a bounteous God—or when he has dwelt on the happy ſcenes that continually ariſe in a well regulated family—who are every thing to each other, and who live together loving and beloved.—And, my friend, is Werter a character to be forgotten?

LET.

LETTER XIII.

September the 13th.

WE were yeſterday at a very brilliant and crowded aſſembly at the Princeſs of H——'s. It was an entertainment given in honor of her birth-day, and every art, every luxury was introduced that could render it delightful. After a moſt ſumptuous dinner—and coffee had been preſented to every gueſt—we retired to the ſaloon, the doors of which were thrown open upon a lawn ſurrounded with tents, apparently ſupported by feſtoons of flowers, which extended from one to the other all round them—in each there was a

little table ſpread with fruit and confectionary of different ſorts. At both ends of the lawn were bands of muſic—the one played the Engliſh country dances—the other cottillons and allemandes—In an inſtant every body was in motion—the Count of Holſtein ſeized my hand, and conducted me to the ſet. The gaiety of the ſcene and the lively tones of the muſic had inſpired me—we went down the dance with ſpirit and eaſe. At the end of it we were complimented by the Princeſs herſelf, who aſſured us we "did honor to her aſſembly," and at the ſame inſtant preſented a young relation of hers—the Duke de G——, who was, ſhe ſaid, ambitious of leading off an allemande with me—

The Count looked at him with *hauteur*—bit his lips, and with a malicious ſmile—bowed his reſignation. The Duke was a ſtranger—or rather he was a native of the place, but a long abſence had made him new amongſt them—he had been thro' moſt of the European Courts, and had travelled in a ſtile of ſplendor, which had enſured him every where a good reception, and he was returned with that air of ſelf-conſequence which generally impoſes. His bow—was foreign—the air with which he led me up the lawn—even his ſtep had ſomething in it unlike any of the others. His manner was commanding, and he had about him all that importance, which ſeems ſo ſatisfied with itſelf,

and ſo well knows to maintain its own dignity. In ſhort he was the wonder of the men, and the admiration of the women.—We began our dance——he had imported new changes—different turns—and many graces, which I had never before ſeen in an allemande. He whiſpered them whilſt we were waiting for a place, and fortunately I ſucceeded ſo well in the execution, that he was in raptures. The eyes of the whole company were upon us—I trembled at being ſo much noticed —I had nearly ſtopped, "Take courage," ſaid he, "you dance divinely—you move a goddeſs—how fortunate am I!"—We finiſhed, and were univerſally applauded. What an inundation of compli-

ments

ments did I not receive from him, his *fierté* vaniſhed, and he was my ſlave.—The Count returned—he congratulated me in the ſtrongeſt terms upon the entertainment I had given the company—the Duke looked for his ſhare of the applauſe, but he looked in vain—Holſtein would not even ſee that he was by my ſide. But amply was he recompenſed by the continued repetition of—How he dances! did you ever ſee any thing ſo graceful? It is Apollo himſelf!—this was echoed from all quarters.

They each redoubled their aſſiduities—they had no eyes, no ears, but for me. Their compliments were well turned, but they were to me inſipid—fatiguing—tireſome.—I

was

was entreated to dance again but I declined it, "it was," I ſaid, "more than I could ſupport—the fatigue would be too great for me."—They each aſſented to my excuſe, and ſtrove to entertain me—the Count by ſatirizing every woman preſent, and the Duke by a finiſhed deſcription of the Britiſh Court. I liſtened to him with pleaſure, for he led me through quite a new ſcene. He dwelt with rapture on the virtues of the Engliſh queen—the majeſty, yet the mildneſs, with which ſhe ſupported her dignity—her exceſſive humanity—the generous eagerneſs with which ſhe entered into and relieved the diſtreſſes of her ſubjects—amiable in herſelf, ſhe forms the happineſs of

thoſe about her. What a character this for a ſovereign!—He was charmed with the beauty and manners of the Engliſh women—he deſcribed them accurately, and to do him juſtice, if they are as lovely as he repreſents them to be, they deſerve all that can be ſaid in their favor.—But what luxuries have they not introduced amongſt them—he tells me in their great cities Nature is entirely excluded, and Art ſupplies her place—that they have no diſtinction of Summer and Winter, for in July their deſerts are ſupplied with ices of the flavor of various fruits, and in December they wear a profuſion of flowers freſh from their beds—whilſt an artificial heat is introduced beneath the floors to

prevent

prevent thoſe gueſts ſuffering from the cold whom chance has placed at a diſtance from the ſtove.—He ſpoke of ſome new and ſurpriſing inventions lately crept in amongſt them, which he acknowledged tended to ſoften and refine, and would, he imagined in time ſubdue the Britons to an equality with their neighbours the French.—He then talked of France—in ſhort the poor Count was in deſpair—he could not introduce a ſentence. At length ſupper was announced. At the ſame moment they each preſented a hand, and I, undetermined which to give mine to, made an effort to move, which the Duke perceiving eagerly caught my hand, and conducted me to the ſupper-room—The

Count

Count followed—he looked angrily at me, and with contempt at G—— paſſing by me—" Is this well done Eleanora?—is it generous?—but I ſhall find a time. . . . ." and without waiting a reply he walked haſtily on. His glance at the Duke, and his "I ſhall find a time," alarmed me.—What can he mean, thought I, a time to revenge himſelf on me—ah! how inſignificant his threat—or on G——, but we ſhall ſee.—When we entered the room the tables were nearly filled, and the Count was ſeated by the Dutcheſs of B——, the Philoſopher.—Maria—if this was his revenge I was ſatisfied. Poor Count, what a converſation have you to ſupport!—and the idea turned my features to a ſmile.

He

He obſerved it, and riſing, offered me his ſeat.—The Duke would have led me further—but Holſtein was inſiſting, I declining, and the Dutcheſs on the other hand with her arm through his, requeſting he would not be ſo rude to leave her, when ſhe had congée'd the Count of O——— and the Captain of the Guard to make room for him.—The confuſion our groupe occaſioned was exceſſive.—The men flew to place me, and the women were waiting in ſilent wonder to ſee how the affair would terminate, when the Princeſs perceiving the debate, ſent a ſervant to her nephew with orders to conduct me round on her ſide, where ſhe had retained ſeats for us both.—The figure of the Count

was

was ſcarcely human, nor can I deſcribe his countenance—his mouth ſeemed actuated by a ſomething, between a ſmile of pretended ſatisfaction, and a grin of defiance—the color ruſhed into his cheeks, and he involuntarily ſtepped one foot over the bench—which had nearly overſet the fat Dutcheſs, who had not yet relinquiſhed her hold.—I left them ſo ſituated and proceeded to the Princeſs's table, at which, as a ſtranger, I had the honor of ſitting. Ah! theſe pompous meetings:—of how little conſequence was it to me where I ſat!—When ſupper was ended we returned to the ſaloon, which was ſuperbly illuminated, and the muſic formed a ſemi-circle at each end, that we

might

might continue our dancing without the inconvenience of the damps or night air.—The Count came up, he again offered his hand for an Engliſh country dance. "I cannot, Eleanora," ſaid he, "attempt an allemande with you—I ſhould put you quite out, and believe me the preciſion with which your traveller attended to every ſtep, was no proof of his attachment."—"Of his attachment, my Lord, you forget we are acquaintance of an evening only,"—"That is to ſay, madam, a few evenings more may complete the enchantment you have already begun."—"How ſtrangely you interpret, my Lord, and to ſave you a reprimand which you would not perhaps like, I will join the ſet, but remember

remember it is for this dance only —I am not accuſtomed to ſuch kind of conduct."—" Oh! forgive, forgive," cried he, " I never will offend you more.—If you knew what I ſuffer when". . . . . " It is time we began, my Lord."—The dance was over: and I went down a ſecond and a third time with the Duke. It was now one o'clock, and we were ſummoned to an elegant refreſhment of tea, coffee, orgeat, &c. &c.—Miſs de L——, who was of our party, ſat near me, and a young Counſellor, whom I had not before obſerved, was ſtanding behind her chair talking to her. In the courſe of converſation he ſpoke to me—the tone of his voice ſtruck me—it raiſed in my heart an emo-

tion I could not conquer—I longed anxiouſly to liſten to his diſcourſe, and at the ſame time I flattered myſelf his ſentiments would correſpond with the ideas I had formed of him. —I was not diſappointed.—A chair being vacant near me, he took it, and —ſhall I tell you? he recommended himſelf to me by his ſimilitude to Werter.—Dancing was again propoſed—he regretted that he was engaged, but he truſted he ſhould not find his partner.—She appeared, and they joined the ſet. I declined any more dancing, and my Aunt talked of our going—I readily conſented, and about two we reached our own houſe.—Maria, I have read over this letter—and what is it I have been relating! how trifling!

how

how ridiculous does it appear—but it is a taſk I have impoſed on myſelf, and I will purſue it, if it is only to baniſh from my thoughts more dear, more intereſting recollections.

LETTER XIV.

September the 17th.

THE Princeſs's entertainment has been ſucceeded by one given by Lady T——, not ſo fine indeed, but to me how much more intereſting, and why was it ſo?—Ah! Maria, how can we account for our feelings—they are not, indeed they are not voluntary, or I never ſhould, when ſurrounded with all

the Nobleſſe, many of them anxiouſly ſoliciting the honor of my hand for the evening, have preferred this Counſellor, who, in his Werter-like-manner, ſimply requeſted the favor of me. I have heard that vanity is the ruling paſſion of every woman's heart: and however for a moment it may yield to inclination, yet whenever an opportunity offers it reſumes its place, and haughtily ſacrifices every trace of love to its ſuperior dictates.—It is not ſo, my friend, for I was courted by the Baron M——; the Prince himſelf offered me his hand—his nephew again—and the Count, you may be ſure, did not forget me—yet I danced with Ponthin—I ſacrificed them all at the ſhrine of Werter.

What

What was the envy of the women to me in compariſon to the tender remembrances which Ponthin recalled. Situated as I am, this is not a thing to boaſt of--I acknowledge it, Maria, but for this one evening, ſaid I to myſelf, only this one evening, I will indulge myſelf—every hour ſince I have been here has been given up to others—for once ſurely then I may aim at happineſs. How dangerous was this reſolution—yet I perſiſted—And this Ponthin, where has he been ſo long concealed? and from whence is he? ſo unlike every other being here—I had ſcarcely formed theſe enquiries in my own mind, when I learnt from him that he was from ———, that he had been very ſeverely indiſpoſed of late.

(Ah! my friend, perhaps ſome ſecret grief had preyed upon his heart) and was but juſt arrived, to try the efficacy of the baths near this place. ——And may they reſtore thee, thought I to myſelf, and poſſibly to ſome ſweet woman who loves and is beloved by thee, who now laments thy abſence and prays, fervently prays for thy returning health. The idea ſoftened me, and a tear ſtarted to my eye.—It had hardly time to appear, when a glance from the Count frightened it back again.—He advanced—" My God," ſaid he, " how charming you are to-night—what expreſſion—what intelligence in your countenance." Do you know I felt as if he knew the extent of my affection for Wer-

ter,

ter, and I ſeemed to ſhrink from him with diſguſt—" Why is it, Eleanora," he continued, " that you will not give me one dance this evening?" " Becauſe I was before engaged," returned I, " and it is not, you know, cuſtomary to change partners." " And yet you changed when at the Princeſs's, you chagrined me ſo much." " It was not my fault, the Princeſs herſelf introduced a ſtranger to me, and it was not for me, at her own houſe, to diſpute the point with her." " You give excellent reaſons for your conduct, madam, but at preſent, when M. de Ponthin permits me". . . . . " I beg pardon, my Lord, I do not indeed permit—I claim and ſupport my right—it is the will of the lady

only I will ſubmit to."——"My will," ſaid I, "is to keep to the partner I firſt engaged myſelf to—conſequently, my Lord, you are anſwered."—I was angry with him, Maria, for daring to ſuppoſe that Ponthin would reſign me to him. Ah! I knew him to well: from the firſt moment he ſpoke to me, I formed my opinion, and what I have hitherto ſeen of him has confirmed my conjectures. I judge of him by Werter—by Werter!—what a trial to bring him to. If he is equal to that he muſt be great indeed. But, Maria, though I am pleaſed, delighted with him as a ſubſtitute, yet I feel that he is not Werter. He has however his tone, his accent, his manner. His mind is highly cultivated,

vated, and his notions liberal—but he has not that force of expreſſion, that ſtrength of determination by which Werter is ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed—He is more ſoft, more gentle—and yet how gentle have I ſeen Werter—but enough.—We danced, but not violently—I was too much pleaſed with his converſation to let it be often interrupted. He talked, and I liſtened—how much pleaſanter was the evening than that of the Princeſs's. What difference between the ſtyle of the Duke, and the obſervations of Ponthin. The ſcenes of grandeur he introduced how tireſome, when compared to the ſketches of my new friend. His manner was artleſs, but how expreſſive! what did it not convey to you,

how

how minutely did he enter into your feelings—not a look, not a thought eſcaped him—I caught myſelf once looking attentively at him. He obſerved it, and ſeemed to wonder. "Pardon me," ſaid I, "you reſemble ſo ſtrongly in your ideas, in your manner, a very dear friend of mine, that I was trying to trace ſome ſimilitude in features." "And have you ſucceeded?" cried he with impatience—"I would willingly be like any friend you love." "Ah! no," I returned, "you have not the ſame turn of feature, but your ſentiments, your opinions are ſo like, ſo very like, that I can almoſt fancy him preſent." "What pity," ſaid he, with a ſigh, "that I do not repreſent him entirely, you would then be

be ſo ſatisfied with me." "I am contented with you as you are," I rejoined, "we do not make ourſelves." I inſtantly felt the rudeneſs of this remark, but Werter at that moment preſſed ſo ſtrongly on my mind—the glance of his eye—the expreſſion of his look,——I ſaw only him. "We do not indeed," ſaid Ponthin, "or I would be the happy man you ſpeak of." "Happy," I repeated, and I fancy with a particular emphaſis, for he looked ſurpriſed.—"It is enough," ſaid I, "here is the Count coming in ſearch of me."—"And why the Count? has he any particular.... "None, none—but the company are retiring to ſupper, let us follow"—We did ſo, and he was ſeated next

me.

me. The party was large, and they ſeemed determined to fall into duets —the lady near me and her partner, Ponthin and myſelf formed our *tête-à-têtes*, we did not interfere with each other ; and the time how ſhort it appeared. What amiable qualities does he poſſeſs ! what an excellent heart he has, and how refined, how elevated is his underſtanding. A public education has given a freedom to his air, ſo elegant, and ſo diſtinguiſhable—it has alſo adorned his mind, and enlarged his ideas. He is indeed a valuable acquiſition here. But he has art, Maria ; he wants that noble frankneſs, that confidence which marks every thing that Werter ſays and does.—He affected to believe my heart engaged—he wanted to induce me to confeſs—to con-

feſs to him! And in order to perſuade me, he pointed out a lady who had already made him her confidant. "She did right," ſaid I, "doubtleſs ſhe had her reaſons, but I, I have nothing to reveal."—He ſeveral times repeated the enquiry. I aſſured him what I could ſay on affairs of the heart, would not be worth his attention, ſince it was ſo inſipid it could not afford amuſement to a mind like his. He ſmiled, and was obliged to give up the point. But he ſubſtituted a thouſand agreeable ſubjects, and I found him an adept in the art of converſation. When the carriages were announced (for we did not dance after ſupper) he led me to mine, and expreſſed regret at parting. Yeſterday he came to tea with us, and found only our own family.

My

My Aunt is charmed with him, and Louiſa owns, that "although he has no title, he is pleaſing," yet ſhe could not feel happy that I rejected the Prince for a partner, and accepted him—How little does ſhe know of the human heart!

LETTER XV.

September the 25th.

THIS Ponthin is very amiable! the other evening he was giving us an account of his time as it paſſed in his own family—his father, mother and ſiſter are yet living—how happy he is!—And he has a brother

brother to whom he is united by the warmeſt ties of friendſhip, he is an officer in the —— ſervice. Noble, generous, and diſintereſted, he loves a very charming woman, whoſe father, hardened by the force of worldly views, denies the admiſſion into his houſe——which his daughter has given him into her heart. —She is reſolutely determined to marry no other man, and he has vowed to live for her alone. The young woman has no fortune, but what muſt proceed from her relentleſs father, and this child of honor is endeavouring to perſuade her to divide his with him;—but Ponthin fears he will not ſucceed. "She loves," ſaid he, "loves him tenderly, but her ideas are ſo exalted,

and

and her mind ſo pure, that ſhe will not conſent to become a burthen to the man whoſe affection for her outweighs with him every other conſideration.—" How cruel," exclaimed I, " that thoſe few, thoſe very few, who know the value, and feel the force of a true and diſintereſted love ſhould be reſtrained by the cold unfeeling hand of fortune—how many different ſources of miſery are there in this life! ſome are deterred by inability from exerciſing that fervor of generoſity which glows in the heart, and which in ſuch a caſe as this, would at once free this unfortunate woman from the unjuſt tyranny of an avaricious parent---would preſent her a rich gift to the man ſhe loves, and make two

worthy

worthy people happy.—Others there are, who bleſſed with all that fortune can beſtow—marry—and too late find that they are betrayed, cheated, and deceived.—The man who before appeared ſo kind, ſo attentive, now openly avows his paſſion for another, and acknowledges that his only method of attaining the woman he loved, was enſuring the poſſeſſion of a fortune like hers, and that he now defies every diſappointment. The wife in deſpair gives herſelf up to the moſt poignant grief, and a ſhort time puts a period to her miſerable exiſtence. She dies of a broken heart!" "There cannot be ſuch a monſter as you deſcribe," haſtily interrupted Ponthin—"ſuch a wretch never exiſted."—"Yes, my friend, the

picture I draw is a ſad but faithful copy of an original, which lately came within my view."——" My God!" ſaid Ponthin, " and could ſhe not be ſaved—could not the ſweet attentions of a friend pour balm into her wounds—could not Eleanora preſerve her?"—"Ah! no—the dart was irrevocably thrown, ſhe was pierced even before her wrongs were known, and I am perſuaded that nothing but his open and repeated inſults could have induced her to let even a friend ſhare her ſorrows—but they were too public to be long concealed—She died. And the being I ſpeak of married the woman who had been a ſharer in this vile plot, and who is now dividing the ſpoil." " May he be juſtly puniſhed," he cried,

cried, " may he feel all the envenomed ſhafts of love burning in his heart for an object who deſpiſes him, and may he experience from the wretch, who now riots in the ſucceſs of his machinations, the ſame cruelty he ſo vauntingly beſtowed."—" And yet," ſaid I, " theſe are not the only evils we complain of—There is, between theſe two extremes, a fatal one, which though apparently more moderate, is equally ſure in its effect. It is not always equality of ſtation that ſecures happineſs.—A heart may be beſtowed, when all the treaſures of the Eaſt, all the virtues under Heaven, every grace, and every beauty united, cannot recall it. (Ponthin liſtened attentively) The object it

is given to knows not that he poſſeſſes it——and perhaps loves another. (Ponthin bent forward, looked earneſtly in my face, caught my hand and claſped it in both his) When this happens what is to be done?—how can you extricate yourſelf from the deep pit into which you are fallen?—You have, perhaps, perceived, or fancied you perceived evident marks of attachment from the perſon to whom you have given this heart—you ſuffer time to add to—and various accompliſhments to ſtrengthen your attachment. And at length you are undeceived—accident, or more accurate obſervation diſcovers your error—(Ah! Eleanora, ſoftly, ſaid Ponthin) and too late you find in what

what a labyrinth you are involved. The heart ever ready to deceive itſelf, is willing to make excuſes, but the reaſon, the judgment—Ah! that cannot be deceived."--Ponthin walked furiouſly about the room. He was agitated—almoſt convulſed. A tear rolled down my cheek—he ſtopped, perceived it, and ſtood for ſome time gazing at me—I covered my face with my handkerchief—the remembrance of Werter came like a thunderbolt acroſs me—I wept—and ſobbing left the room.—But what avails this, my friend, it muſt, it muſt be conquered. This paſſion at preſent ſo tumultuous—will it ever be ſubdued?

LETTER XVI.

October the 1ſt.

THE Count of Holſtein torments me—he is perpetually repeating the ſame thing—and I never ſee him but he teaſes me with entreaties to liſten to his love. He has the aſſurance to tell me I am obſtinate—that if I would ſuffer his aſſiduities, he thinks I might in time bear to hear him declare his affection. His vanity is inſufferable—*I!*——I hear his profeſſions without the greateſt diſguſt—it can never be!—No; if ever I could liſten to any but Werter, in the language of love, it muſt be Ponthin.—Ponthin, whoſe gentle elegance, whoſe enthuſiaſtic

ſtaſtic ardor is ſo like my Werter's—*my* Werter! did I ſay—Maria how we deceive ourſelves.

LETTER XVII.

October the 9th.

I Cannot ſtay in this place. It is now ſix weeks ſince I have been here, and in all that time not the leaſt tidings, not a word have I heard of Werter. Do you not wonder how I have borne this? For the firſt time ſince he was dear—ſo dear to me; am I ſeparated from him. And into what a ſcene am I thrown! whole days am I obliged to ſpend with thoſe who are ſo tireſome—ſo

diſagreeable to me—and when at night I retire to reſt, inſtead of ſleep I paſs my hours in tears—In the morn I riſe, and the ſame objects preſent themſelves—Again I go to my bed, and ſorrow and melancholy prevails.—This will not do, my friend—I am impatient for ſome news of Werter. If I could only hear he was well, I think I ſhould be contented.

LETTER XVIII.

October the 13th.

I Am ſtill here—my Aunt, who carefully obſerves me——who watches every turn of my countenance—

nance—has at length perceived the fire which conſumes me. She rallies—ſhe condoles with—ſhe councils me—ſhe uſes every effort to induce me to tell her the cauſe of a ſecret grief, which ſhe is ſure oppreſſes me.—But never, never ſhall ſhe tear the ſecret from my boſom.—What would it avail me if ſhe knew it? She can neither alleviate, or mitigate my ſufferings—and ſurely to expoſe our weakneſſes without even a hope of conſolation ariſing from it, is but giving others an advantage over us, which we can never recall, and which ſerves but to encreaſe our confuſion.—I continually tell her ſhe is miſtaken—that the ſadneſs ſhe perceives is natural to me, and that the yet recent loſs of Julia

hangs

hangs heavy at my heart. In this I do not deceive her—in my moſt retired moments, Julia has her full tribute of tears—Ah! dear and amiable ſiſter, wer't thou but near me, I could—yes, I think I could conquer this grief—this paſſion would be ſoftened by thy tender, thy affectionate remonſtrances—I would lay open my heart to thee, and thou would'ſt probe and heal its wounds. And yet—how unaccountable—how intricate are my feelings—I am interrupted, they tell me I muſt dreſs for a ball—I am to wear a white luteſtring embroidered with violets, and the flower that Werter kiſſed—I have had the gown made with that dear violet neareſt my heart.

LETTER XIX.

October the 14th.

I Danced laſt night with Ponthin —but I will not dance with him any more. My friend—his voice—his manner—how did they recall Werter to my own mind--This young man is not happy, and a ſecret ſympathy—a ſympathy perhaps of misfortunes—attaches me to him. I feel for him all the tenderneſs of a brother. He too loves: and loves hopeleſſly—I diſcovered it laſt night —in every word, in every action I could ſee it. He has not that careleſs unconcerned air which you obſerve in thoſe inſipid mortals, whoſe affections (if they have any) have never

never been called forth, or at leaſt extended no farther than themſelves —He loves—and I believe his heart is at a diſtance, nevertheleſs he profeſſes a friendſhip, a ſincere friendſhip for me—and he told me, when I led (without intending it) to the ſubject, that ſome day he would unravel to me the ſecret motions of his heart, but that at preſent he was not at liberty to reveal what gave him ſo much diſquiet.

Ah! Maria, is not the weight of my own ſorrows ſufficient without adding to them the diſtreſſes of a worthy man, for whoſe misfortunes I feel I ſhould be intereſted. If he wants fortune to complete his happineſs—I pity him—but if his love is not returned—poor Ponthin—

what

what muſt he not ſuffer. However, that is ſcarcely poſſible, no one can ſee him with indifference, and I do not believe there is a heart not pre-engaged that could withſtand the ſenſe—the expreſſion—the elegance of Ponthin.—But this ball. It was like all the others—crouded—gay —and fatiguing. I obſerved, that even thoſe who were, or apparently ought to have been moſt ſatisfied, were diſcontented with ſome one thing or other that paſſed. Madame de V. danced with the Chevalier F——, a young Frenchman, and her favorite. But the Duke of G—— paſſed her in the evening and forgot his bow—Louiſa gave her hand to the Prince of ———, and ſhe was happy, her ruling paſſion

was

was flattered—But then I, her companion—who came with her, rejected the Count of Holſtein, and paſſed my time with a Commoner, a Counſellor—This mortified her—"I had no ſpirit, no ſoul"—"I cannot conceive," whiſpered ſhe, "what you find ſo delightful in Ponthin. He is nothing—and beſides I am almoſt ſure that he is engaged to a young lady of great merit, long before he came here." "I am glad of it, my dear Louiſa, he is then I hope happy, but the Prince—he is married, why then do you dance with him?" "O but he is a Sovereign." "An amiable man, and an entertaining companion is to me far preferable to a Sovereign—I like Ponthin—it is my whim, and I

am

am perfectly ſatisfied with the choice I have made." She ſhrugged her ſhoulder, ſmiled with an air of pity for my want of judgment, and joined the dance.—How abſurd are theſe diſtinctions! how ridiculous is all the buſtle which is every day created!—and for what?—for the empty advantages of public opinions—and how often do they moſt materially differ from the private ones. The very people by whom you were a few hours before flattered, careſſed, and admired—now ridicule, deſpiſe, and condemn you—Ah! my friend, I look round the world—I compare the great with the little—I ſeem to ſhrink from ſcenes of ſplendor, and am half tempted to envy the Cottager.

LET.

LETTER XX.

October the 20th.

BY the ſtrangeſt accident in the world, I have heard of Werter. And what have I heard of him—That he is melancholy, languid, and unhappy--That he will not ſee any one, and that he complains of me—he accuſes me of indifference, of unkindneſs in leaving, without having conſulted him. He ſays, Julia with her parting breath conjured him to protect, to watch over me, and I have left him, and the peaceful ſcenes I had been accuſtomed to, to plunge at once into the confuſion of an unfeeling throng of diſſipated beings. He reproaches me with

with gentleneſs, and with every art of ſoft perſuaſion he entreats my return.—Yes—I will return,—I have long been tired of the vain amuſements I have met with here. They are not ſuited to my taſte, nor have they made impreſſion enough to ſteal from me the moſt trifling recollection of Werter.—Laſt night we were at the Theatre—on looking round the houſe, I perceived, in a a box near us, Beequer, Werter's friend and companion: our eyes inſtantly met—I ſtarted with ſurpriſe and joy—How impatiently did I wait for the end of the act—at length the curtain was let down and he joined us. He told me, that having buſineſs to tranſact in this town, he had left ——— yeſterday; that he

had called at my door, and hearing I was at the Theatre, had come purpoſely to ſee me.—" And Werter," ſaid I,—" He is not well," he replied—" but I have a letter from him which will tell you more—he learnt from your ſervants that you were here. He knew I was coming, and gave me this commiſſion, which I execute with pleaſure—to-morrow I return, and in the morning I will call for your commands." I took the letter, trembling—and, the moment I got home, I flew up ſtairs to read it. It was the firſt I had ever received from Werter—with what pleaſure did I trace every line—and it was written by his own hand—he breathed in every ſentence—How I longed to anſwer it, and how tedious was

the

the time of ſupper. Even Ponthin was inſipid.—I mentioned my intention of returning in a few days. "It cannot be," ſaid Ponthin, "we ſhall be undone without you." "Surely," ſaid my Aunt, "you will not leave us at this ſeaſon, now that every thing is ſo gay."—"My dear madam, my preſence is become neceſſary at home—(Ah! Maria, did not Werter ſay it was neceſſary to him?)—I have heard from thence to night—and I muſt go—it is with regret I part from you, but I truſt we may ſoon meet again." "My dear child muſt then promiſe to ſee me again in a ſhort time." I bowed. Ponthin ſat mute with aſtoniſhment. At length he recovered himſelf, and enquired which

road I took. I deſcribed the ſituation and diſtance. He was delighted, for it was ſo many miles nearer his own home—He was now much better than he had been, and had ſome thoughts of returning in a few days.—" Come, come," ſaid my Aunt ſmiling, " let us not loſe all our valuable friends at once; you, Ponthin, muſt ſtay and conſole me for the loſs of Eleanora." " You would have a wretched ſubſtitute, madam." " But when," turning to me, " do you depart?" " In three days from hence," ſaid I. And to that time, Maria, I have fixed it—When I was alone I began to write—again I read Werter's letter, and I wrote an anſwer. It was too tender—I did not like it, and wrote another. Ah! it

was

was the very eſſence of friendſhip: I will ſend this! I laid it by, took two or three turns about the room—then read it again—It was not correct enough, there were ſome expreſſions which might be mended —I altered them, and ſpoiled it. I muſt write a third—this will ſurely do, ſaid I, as I finiſhed it—this I think is cold enough—he cannot any way from this penetrate my ideas. It is formal, preciſe, and ſtiff—again I read Werter's—how elegant! how affecting! it was genuine from the heart.—" My ſtudied letter, which is evidently from the head only, will not bear the teſt of this—beſides, it will betray me more. —Werter will readily ſee through the thin diſguiſe, and condemn the

aukward cheat."—I threw it into the fire, and determined not to write at all. I would give his friend a verbal meſſage for him, it would look as if I had fixed on returning before I heard from him, and was not entirely determined by his letter—I did ſo—I begged him to remember me affectionately to all my friends, and particularly to Werter—"And have you no letter for him?"—"None—I ſhall ſee him in a few days, tell him ſo, and he will not be ſurpriſed that I do not write." He took his leave—and by this time Werter knows that I mean to comply with his requeſt. Why did I not dare tell him it was to pleaſe him, and only him, that I ſo immediately complied with it? I ſhould not have diſguiſed this had

it

it been you who made the ſame demand.—Ah! cruel cuſtom, it will not ſuffer us to ſpeak as the heart dictates, and then it deſpiſes us for a mean concealment of the truth. What pity that hypocriſy ſhould be ſo neceſſary to the happineſs of every individual—the chief art of pleaſing is to throw it like a gauze over our expreſſions: It ſhould be tranſparent enough to let the truth be ſeen through—and, at the ſame time, ſo delicate and ſhining, that it ſhould add a luſtre to what it covers—Truth, without it, would be ſo eaſily attained, that it would be leſs valuable, and the men would not care for the poſſeſſion of it—when once it is their own they have nothing left to hope, nor has their imagination any thing

to paint—The veil then may be ſeen through, but it muſt not be removed.

LETTER XXI.

October the 22d.

THE Count, who has heard that I am about to leave this place, ſent me this morning a note to entreat the favour of an hour's converſation. I gave it to my Aunt, who deſired I would indulge his requeſt, and appointed the time.—He came, and at my feet vowed eternal fidelity—told me his heart and hand were mine, and every future chance of happineſs for him depended on me.

—I

—I thanked him with all the politeneſs he deſerved; but declined the honor of the propoſal, aſſured as I was, I could not return his affection in the manner it merited.—"Ah! madam," ſaid he, "you love another—tell me, tell me, is not Ponthin the happy object of your heart—I am not blind to his merits—he has tenderneſs, he has honor, he has generoſity: Yes, madam, he is generous—for though he adores you, he has this morning allowed that my rank, my fortune, my earlier acquaintance with you—every thing authoriſes my prior declaration, and he will wait at humble diſtance till you have decided my fate. He ſaid this with a noble tear rolling down his face—by Heaven he did—and if Eleanora

—if

—if it is him you love, I will repay him for this exalted ſubmiſſion —he ſhall have half my fortune—rank, in the eyes of Eleanora, is I know of no avail, yet he ſhall have all my intereſt: and—(My God!) I will reſign you to him—yes I will give you to him myſelf. What is there I would not do to contribute to your happineſs?"—I gazed at him with ſurpriſe.—Can this be, thought I, how have I miſtaken your character?—what generoſity, what grandeur of ſoul. "Speak, ſpeak Eleanora, is Ponthin the enviable". . . . . "No; no indeed, my Lord. But your generoſity,—your goodneſs, demands all my candour.—I will tell you, and tell you ſincerely, that my heart is not my own,

own, nor do you know the man who entirely engroſſes it." He threw himſelf on a ſopha and hid his face. "Ah! my Lord," ſaid I, "do not give way to deſpair—I know how to pity and feel for you, yet I cannot love another." "What is it you ſay," he cried, "it cannot be that your love is not returned.—Is there a man who could be blind to it? Oh! name him, name him, and he muſt, he ſhall be yours. What torment is equal to ſlighted love?" "Let us part, my Lord, and believe that you poſſeſs my utmoſt gratitude."—"Will you not tell who it is? if not Ponthin, who?—Eleanora, allow me the only pleaſure I can ever know, that of contributing to your happineſs." "I cannot, my Lord,

I dare

I dare not tell you—it is enough that he knows not of my attachment himſelf. Spare me, I beg of you—to no one but you would I have ſaid half as much; but your generous warmth—the intereſt you ſeem to take in my happineſs, has beguiled me of my ſecret—conceal it I beſeech you. Adieu, my Lord, may you be happy"—I left the room.—The Count ſtaid ſome minutes, and then I heard him go down ſtairs.—My Aunt met me with ſurpriſe and enquiry painted on her features. "What have you done with the Count," ſaid ſhe—"He is gone, madam." "Gone!" ſhe repeated, "and does he not return to dinner." "No; my dear Aunt. You cannot

not be a ſtranger to the intention of his viſit here—he came to make me an offer of himſelf, which I have declined, and ". . . . . " Declined, my Ellen! Have you then refuſed the Count Holſtein?—do you know his fortune, his intereſt, his power?" " Ah! yes." " Well," ſaid this amiable woman, ſtraining me to her boſom, " doubtleſs my dear girl knows, and conſults her own happineſs. But I could have wiſhed—ſuch a protector, Ellen—indeed I could have wiſhed you had accepted him."—Louiſa came in, and we ſaid no more on the ſubject.—In the evening we had a party at home. They aſſembled, but the Count was abſent—Ponthin looked pale and dejected. He choſe a moment to approach me when

when I was alone.—Every one ſeemed engaged. "You are going, Eleanora," he ſaid, "and you leave us all unhappy—The Count of Holſtein is wretched. I have ſeen him—he ſent for me juſt now, and he is gone to bed with a high fever—the agitation of his mind is too much for him—but I do not wonder. And me too—but, Eleanora, you will let me be your friend. In that ſacred character I will watch over you as my darling treaſure—I will be your guardian angel. Will you allow me your friendſhip?"—"Moſt willingly, Ponthin. But you have ſo many excellent qualities, and ſuch a heart, that I give you notice, all the advantage will be mine."—He thanked me with rapture, and requeſted

queſted he might call and ſee me in his way home, which would be ſoon—" for," he continued, " I cannot remain here when you are gone." He aſked me ſeveral times, in the courſe of the evening, " How I could be ſo chearful—you ſeem to enjoy the idea of leaving us—ſince I have known you, I never ſaw you in ſuch ſpirits." " The heart, you know, will ſometimes ſhew itſelf in ſpite of form and etiquette. I am going to ſome friends who are very dear to me, and with whom I ſhall be happy —happier than theſe palaces can make me. I am not formed for ſo much magnificence; and, ſhall I own to you, the idea of a ſimple repaſt tomorrow evening by my fire ſide, fills me with a pleaſure that I am not able

able to expreſs." "Shall you be alone, Ellen?—or is it the view of a *tête-à-tête* which affords you ſo much ſatisfaction?" "Ah! I cannot tell—but perhaps alone." "And will you ſuffer in the midſt of your retirement one thought of Ponthin to intrude?" "Many—I will retrace the hours that you have brightened by your converſation—-that you have added wings to, and with the moſt tender friendſhip will I wait the time that may bring us together again. Be aſſured I ſhall not eaſily forget you."

He held my hand to his heart, and whiſpered ſomething, which I did not hear—his eyes, however, ſpoke his gratitude, and his attentions the whole evening were pointed. At

ſupper

ſupper he ſat next me—he tried to be chearful, but he ſcarcely ſucceeded. There was a ſomething in the idea of the laſt time, ſo unpleaſant, ſo harſh—it is like ſhutting out every future expectation, and giving up yourſelf at once to ſorrow and diſmay—This ſtruck me forcibly as I looked at Ponthin, and I would willingly have forgotten it was the laſt evening I was to liſten to him. He would not take leave—he ſhould ſee me again (he ſaid) to-morrow—he would breakfaſt with us.—Adieu, Maria, it is very late, and I have not time to comment on this letter—I have given you a deſcription of circumſtances as they aroſe; I feel exhauſted with the different emotions of this day, and will try to

ſleep. This is the laſt letter you will receive from hence—To-morrow, early in the morning, I leave this place.

LETTER XXII.

October the 23d.

I Am returned, Maria, and with what delight am I ſeated at my little table in the dreſſing-room that looks toward the fields. The ſervants have adorned it with flowers, and the extreme neatneſs of the furniture gives it an air of peaceful ſimplicity that is very grateful to me.—It is an holiday, and the bells of the town

town are ringing. The diſtance, which is about half a league, mellows the ſound to a ſoftneſs truly harmonious, and inſpires a pleaſing kind of melancholy—which, inſtead of oppreſſing, expands the heart, and leaves it open to every impreſſion of tenderneſs and affection. It is almoſt duſk—and the riſing moon plays on the trees of the avenue leading up to the houſe with a mild ſerenity which charms me.—I have not yet ſeen Werter. He has called here, they tell me, every evening for this week paſt. This morning he was again here, and expreſſed impatience at my not being arrived—he enquired of the ſervants whether they had heard from me, and what time I had appointed.—At four he

returned, but I was not come, ſo that I fear he will not call again this evening. I have ordered them to bring my coffee in this room, and till it comes I will write on—Ponthin was here—was here!—was at my Aunt's, I mean, this morning before we were any of us down ſtairs. —I was the firſt who came into the room, and ſmiling at his impatience, enquired at what hour he had riſen? He anſwered, "I have not been in bed all night, Eleanora, I have been traverſing my room, and watching for the dawn." "That was not well done," I ſaid, "you are very imprudent to hazard your health as you do—conſider, I beg, that I now feel myſelf intereſted about you —are we not friends? and can any thing

thing that ſo nearly concerns you be indifferent to me!—you have not forgot the league we have formed?"

"No, Eleanora, never whilſt my ſoul is animated by the breath of the Eternal, never can I forget you—the pure flame with which he invigorates my mind, ſhall burn for you alone—next to my God, you occupy every finer feeling, they are all centered in you--and, from henceforth, you are the ray of light that muſt conduct me thro' this globe. I know you, Ellen, I know your heart, and my glory ſhall be to love and imitate you."

I was affected even to tears, and he paſſed his hand acroſs his eyes. "No," he exclaimed, recovering himſelf, "this muſt not be—make

allowances for me, Eleanora, and if in this trial the ſtrength of my affection overpowers me, do not condemn, but pity me.—I ſhall be better, indeed I ſhall be better when you are quite gone. But this—this is too much." He caught my hand to his lips—I begged him to compoſe himſelf—talked of things very foreign from my heart—then wept—and talked again. Ponthin did not ſpeak a word. The ardor of his ſoul had full poſſeſſion of his features, and he gazed at me in ſilence. My Aunt relieved us from this diſtreſſing ſituation, and we went to breakfaſt.—There is nothing ſo diſagreeable as a formal parting, but I went through the ceremony with all but Ponthin. When it came to his turn, I gave

I gave him my hand to lead me down ſtairs, and he put me into the carriage, but juſt as it was driving off, he ſtopped it, and putting his head within the window,—"Ellen," he ſaid, "I ſhall ſee you within a week."—I had not time for a reply, for bidding the man drive on—he diſappeared.—Alone, and melancholy, how tireſome was the firſt part of my journey—but I recollected that it would convey me to Werter, and in an inſtant the ſcene was changed. Every thing ſmiled around me, and the moſt enchanting illuſions danced before my eyes. For a moment I lamented the Count.—We had ſent in the morning to know how he did, and we heard that he was extremely ill—I was grieved at this event—but, ſelf,

how wilt thou interpoſe? I rejoiced that it was not Werter. This again changed my train of thought, and I arrived here in the happieſt frame of mind imaginable.—I look forward, Maria, to happy days—days, unclouded by diſappointment or diſtreſs. And yet, why this foreboding? I have no grounds for it—let me not ſearch farther—it is, perhaps, the return to my native air—or the peaceful manner in which I have ſpent theſe laſt few hours—or the expectation of Werter, that has given this tranquillity to my mind. —It matters not from what it ariſes, but the ſenſations it produces are too ſweet to be reaſoned away—and I will enjoy them in their full extent while they laſt.

LET-

LETTER XXIII.

October the 24th.

WERTER has been here—I have ſeen him, and I am happy—I know not what I ſaid on his approach, but I know that never was rapture more ſtrongly expreſſed, than in the look which he directed to me. He did not ſpeak, but he flew to me, and held my hand to his beating heart—I aſked him a thouſand queſtions about himſelf—he anſwered them by enquiries about me. How I had been engaged? Who I had ſeen? And what could have kept me ſo long away? I related many ſcenes to him—painted

in

in vivid colours the deceit—the impoſition of the great world—told him the diſguſt I had conceived for it, the obſervation I had made on it—deſcribed to him ſeveral of the moſt ſtriking characters, and ſpoke of Ponthin with delight. He liſtened and commented, and finiſhed every ſentence by expreſſing his joy at my return. What a different being has this viſit made me.—Oh Eternal Fountain of light! Why is it in the power of one created being to give ſuch happineſs to another?—I cannot reconcile to myſelf that what I now feel can ariſe from any other ſource than thy indulgent hand;—Thou reigneſt over all thy works, and it is thy will that I ſhould be ſatisfied with my lot.

LET-

LETTER XXIV.

November the 16th.

I Walk in theſe gardens, which once gave me ſo much uneaſineſs, and I feel a delight I cannot expreſs. Every thing is changed, the ſame paths which before appeared ſo mournful, now court my footſteps. I do not ſigh—my tears never flow, and I cannot conceive that there is in nature a more tranquil—a more happy being than myſelf.

LETTER XXV.

December the 10th.

I Have not attempted to go once into the town ſince I came home. I do not wiſh it, this place is every thing to me, and I continually diſcover new ſources of amuſement. Werter ſees that the garden is overrun with weeds in my abſence, and for ſome days paſt we have ſet about clearing them away—now and then he reproaches me that I do not work hard enough—he ſays I am idle, and to make it up I fetch him an apple and pare it for him to eat. You would have laughed yeſterday had you ſeen us, his hands were too dirty to touch it, and I muſt cut it into

into ſlices, and put it into his mouth —either he or I was aukward, and ſometimes a piece fell on the ground —then he would chide and proteſt he would ſerve me the ſame when it was my turn. He has been here every day ſince I came home, and though his viſits are not very long each time, yet the ſeeing him ſo conſtantly, gives a life to every moment.—When he is not here, I am expecting him—when he comes, I am pleaſed, delighted, happy, and for the firſt two or three hours after he is gone, I amuſe myſelf by recollecting all he ſaid, and how he looked. You will laugh at me, Maria—I give you leave —perhaps I deſerve to be laughed at, but remember it is to you, and you only I reveal all this. Between

me and Werter is ſtill that veil I once ſpoke of to you, and when I meet him it is a cambrick one I am obliged to wear, or his penetrating eyes would read my heart with as much facility as he reads Petrarch when in a ſtill evening, in the honey ſuckle bower, I liſten to the ſounds of his voice.

LETTER XXVI.

January the 4th, 1771.

WE have got a new employment—it is the tranſlation of ſome of Petrarch's Sonnets, Werter has choſen the 167th, and he has

has given me the 102d—I ſend them to you, Maria, that you may compare them, and tell me (I beg of you) whether we have preſerved the turn of the originals. It is not for us to judge—Werter would be indulgent to mine, and I—could I ſee a fault in his?

SONNET CLXVII.

THOUGH form'd beyond the higheſt reach of art,
It was not one fair hand alone cou'd bind:
But both, and thoſe two beauteous arms, entwin'd
Such laſting chains around my captive heart.

A thouſand ſportive Loves, in every part
Of that enchanting form, ſure refuge find:
Whence with a careleſs eaſe, amongſt mankind,
Their pointed arrows they reſiſtleſs dart.

Thoſe love-inſpiring eyes, and heav'n-arch'd brows!
That angel mouth, whence ſuch ſweet accents flow!

Thoſe

Thoſe pearly teeth and roſy lips! diſplay
Charms, to which every mortal trembling bows.
That hair, that forehead white as new fall'n ſnow,
Exceeds, in luſtre, ſummer's noontide ray.

SONNET CII.

IF 'tis not love, Oh! Cupid, what is meant
By my ſtrange feelings; and if love, explain,
Why, if 'tis bad, it ſhould ſuch ſweets contain;
And if its good, why ſhould it thus torment?
If my will guides it why ſhould I lament?
And if againſt it, all regret is vain!
O living death! O moſt enchanting pain!
Whence is thy power if not with my conſent?

And if I do conſent! what folly's mine,
That in contrary winds, in a frail boat,
Thus without pilot truſts the open ſeas:
So fair to ſight, yet where ſuch dangers float.
Alas! I cannot my own ſtate define:
But burn in winter, and in ſummer freeze.

LET-

LETTER XXVII.

January the 27th.

MY days paſs away with the peaceful ſerenity of a mind at eaſe—I have not a wiſh to form—every idea is concentered in the ſweet ſatisfaction of knowing that I am not indifferent to Werter. It is true, he has never ſaid, "Eleanora, I love you"—but then every word he utters confirms it to me as ſtrongly. He ſeeks no amuſement but what I partake of—he tells me that he is reſtleſs and uneaſy when he is abſent from me, and that my preſence brightens every ſcene. Werter tells me this, Maria, he liſtens to every

thing I ſay with ſuch unfeigned attention, and if at any time I am for a moment loſt in a ſoft reverie (contemplating, perhaps, the happineſs diffuſed around me from the charms of his ſociety) with what gentle eloquence he interrupts me: he cannot bear that the leaſt gloom ſhould hang upon my mind. He is not noiſy —Werter is naturally not very chearful, yet he exerts himſelf, and frequently gives a turn of gaiety to the converſation, which I unaffectedly enter into—He conſults me in every material circumſtance relating to himſelf—he would be ever by my ſide, yet think not we are always alone—Becquer, his friend Becquer, frequently forms a trio with us. He is very dear to Werter, and I have con-

conceived an eſteem for him, which will not eaſily be effaced: This worthy young man lives in the town near this place, and Werter's mother inhabits it likewiſe, ſome ſimilarity of ſentiment has formed an attachment between them, which they equally cheriſh, though I have obſerved that in every thing of conſequence Becquer conſults Werter's opinion before he chuſes to deliver his, this I have attributed to his conſciouſneſs of Werter's ſuperiority of genius and judgment, which allows him at once to conceive and decide —but it may proceed from a happy accommodating temper, which is, I believe, natural to him—at any rate he is much in Werter's intereſt. Judge then if he is not well received by me.

LETTER XXVIII.

February the 10th.

I Knew laſt night that I ſhould not ſee Werter till this evening, and in the morning I walked out, intending to have paſſed an hour at the parſonage with Agatha, who has lately loſt her little ſiſter, and is almoſt inconſolable. The ſun ſhone out with great ſplendor, and the air was delightful—it had all the ſweetneſs of a fine morning in the ſpring. And inſtead of going the road way, I went round by the fields at the back of the garden—I croſſed the firſt path, and went through your favorite little gate, which you know has

has the ivy ſeat at a few paces from it. I ſat down, and taking Paſtor Fido from my pocket, had juſt turned to that charming ſoliloquy of Amarillis, "Care ſelve beate"—when I was interrupted by a ſudden and violent cry—I raiſed my eyes, and ſaw at a ſmall diſtance a youth running towards me, and beckoning with his hat for me to come to him, I roſe inſtantly, and took the path he was in, when he exclaimed in a tone of agitation and fright—"Make haſte! make haſte!"—I ran, and the moment he perceived I was near him, he turned and almoſt flew, I doubled my pace, and we arrived at the ſame inſtant at the door of a cottage, which the young man threw open, and taking my hand he puſhed

me in—crying out, "Ah! ſee; ſave, oh ſave her"—Upon a wicker chair ſat a woman with her feet ſtretched out, and apparently ſtiffened, one hand hung down by her ſide, and the other lay in her lap, her head was reclined on the back of the chair, and the paleneſs of death was on her face. Cloſe to her ſtood a young woman lovely as an angel, with her hands raiſed, and claſped in each other:—her eyes were ſteadily fixed on the countenance of the object before her. "How is this, my dear girl," I ſaid, "have you nothing to relieve this good woman?" "No," ſhe replied, without altering her attitude, or ever looking towards me, but ſhe ſpoke it in ſuch a tone of voice as pierced my heart.

heart. "Not a drop of water?" ſaid I, "fetch me ſome water quickly," "yes," ſaid the young woman, but ſhe did not move. The youth flew out and returned inſtantly with ſome, I threw part of it in her face, and bathed her hands and temples with lavender, whilſt the young man held the ſalts, I gave him, to her noſe.—"You are frightened, my good girl," I ſaid, "but do not alarm yourſelf, it is nothing —ſhe will recover—ſhe will recover preſently." At the moment ſhe fetched a deep ſigh, and opening her eyes, looked wildly around her.— "My God!" exclaimed the young woman, and dropping on her knees, "My God! I thank thee." "What is the matter, my dear child?" ſaid

the other, "what is this?—and you, Conrade, what ails you both?" "Oh! ſhe ſpeaks, ſhe ſpeaks," cried the beautiful girl, "Ah! my mother," and ſeizing one of her hands, ſhe preſſed it to her boſom, and then wept violently. "Bertha, my dear Bertha," ſaid Conrade, and ran to ſupport her.—They were both on their knees by the ſide of the invalid, who looked tenderly on them—"my dear Bertha," continued the young man, "be comforted, why do you afflict yourſelf ſo much, did not that good lady tell you ſhe would do well? Ah! madam," raiſing his eyes to me, "you have reſtored her to us, and the benediction of Heaven be upon you." The mother turned towards me, "Explain

this

this to me, madam, I have been ill, very ill have I not? but I am better—my dear children, I am better—and who is this lady?" "Ah ſhe is an Angel from Heaven," cried Bertha, "you was dead and ſhe has brought you to life." "And I," ſaid Conrade, "I found her in the field.—My poor Bertha was very ill too, for I ſpoke to her, and ſhe would not anſwer me—and ſhe is ſtill ill," looking attentively in her eyes, "let me fetch you a little water?" "Oh! no, no, we are all well now," anſwered Bertha, riſing, and in a graceful manner offering me a chair, entreated that I would ſit down, and receive thanks for my generous goodneſs. The manner ſhe ſaid this in—her action—the appearance of her

mother,

mother, and the air of neatneſs, nay almoſt elegance, that reigned in the houſe aſtoniſhed me.—I was too much taken up with the illneſs of the perſon before me, and the affecting ſcene that enſued to obſerve this at firſt—but ſitting down, I had leiſure to be more attentive to them: I firſt enquired of the good mother, whether ſhe was ſubject to complaint, "Never, madam," ſhe replied, "I never was ſo ſeized before, and I know not now what has been the matter, except that I believe I fainted." "A mere nothing," I ſaid, "you have, perhaps, overfatigued yourſelf with walking, and if this good little girl or her brother, (Bertha bluſhed, and gave Conrade a glance, which I did not underſtand,

but

but which ſeemed to expreſs a great deal) had thrown a little cold water in your face, it would have relieved you inſtantly." "Oh! madam," cried Conrade, "ſhe was ſo frightened!——that alarmed me, and I ran for aſſiſtance, for our ſervant is gone to town for proviſion. You were very good to come ſo immediately, and I believe, I called out rather rudely, for I ſcarcely knew what I ſaid; but if I did I beg your pardon." "And I too, madam," ſaid the mother, "for the trouble I have given you." "You have it, my good friends, I rejoice that I have been of uſe to you;—but tell me—how is it that I have never ſeen any of you before? I live very near, and I thought I had known all

my

my neighbours." "Ah! madam," ſhe replied, "I have been here but a very ſhort time, and it is not for me at preſent to ſeek acquaintance." There was an air of dignity around her, as ſhe ſaid this, which almoſt bordered on *hauteur*. "But I would have ſought you, my dear friend," ſaid I, "and I flatter myſelf neither you, or my little Bertha, would have denied me that ſatisfaction:—what ſay you, Bertha, ſhall I be your friend?" "Moſt willingly, madam," ſhe exclaimed, preſenting me her hand; "and this is my pledge." Theſe people have ſeen better days, ſaid I to myſelf, there is a ſomething in their appearance—their voice, and the language they uſe which beſpeaks it. Bertha

tha was dreſſed in a pale brown jacket and coat made of ſtuff, and bound with a light blue ribbon, a gold claſp faſtened it at the wriſts: —her hair hung in great profuſion about a face that was truly angelic: ſuch a complexion, and ſuch beautiful dark blue eyes, with a mouth, and teeth, that the Graces might have envied. A plain blue ribbon, with a knot on one ſide, was bound ſimply round her head: which inſtead of confining her hair, was here and there concealed by the flowing curls that hung careleſsly about it. She ſeemed to be about ſixteen, tall, indeed, of her age; and her air, which from her height was naturally majeſtic, was ſo mingled with ſuch a winning ſweetneſs, that you could

not

not tell which predominated.—She had a thouſand graces when ſhe moved, and the expreſſion in her features was enchanting. Her mother had been very handſome; but with that particular turn of countenance, in which the traces of melancholy were ſtrongly marked:—her figure was noble, and ſhe had the moſt beautiful hand and arm I ever ſaw. There was a ſimplicity in her dreſs that ſeemed to ſay ſhe had done with finery;—her gown was of the ſame ſtuff and color as her daughter's, but without any ornaments:—and her air was ſo commanding, that it appeared at variance with dreſs and ſituation. Conrade was an animated, graceful figure of about nineteen: his eyes expreſſive to a great degree;—his

perſon

perſon elegantly formed, and his dark brown hair, untied, and hanging half way down his back. This groupe was too intereſting to paſs unnoticed; and I found I could not leave them with the cold civilities that politeneſs only required.—I longed to be better known to them, and yet, I feared, to intrude: but upon Bertha's giving me her hand, I warmly preſſed them to return with me, and ſpend the remainder of the day. They declined it; but hoped I would do them the favour to call and ſee them ſoon.——"I will come to-morrow!" I ſaid, "for I ſhall not be eaſy till I ſee your mother again, and in the mean time I will leave this little bottle of ſalts, that if her illneſs ſhould return, you may not be frightened, but know how

how to relieve her:—or you, Conrade, can ſtep and fetch me; it is but a little way," ſaid I, ſhewing him the houſe; "and you know my friend we can both run." "But I truſt, madam," ſaid Bertha, "my dear mother will not be ill again: however I will keep the bottle, if it is only to induce you to return to us." When the maid came home, I roſe to go, and they begged I would not mention to any one what had paſſed; for they wiſhed to be concealed. "It is very material to us," ſaid the mother, looking affectionately at me, "that we are not known: but another time, my dear madam, you ſhall judge:—at preſent, let me beg of you to keep our ſecret." I promiſed to do ſo; and

purſued

purſued my walk—then ſat an hour with Agatha, and returned to dinner. I could think of nothing but the ſcene I had quitted.—Werter came to tea—I felt uneaſy that I was not at liberty to tell him all that paſſed:—but I reſpected the ſecret of theſe good people—and my promiſe was ſacred. Werter is very amiable, and he will not betray them. But how do I know, but it may by eſſential to them to be concealed even from him?—when I know their ſtory, then will I aſk their permiſſion to tell him—and how delighted will Werter be in the ſociety of ſuch a family.—I determined not to let them intrude any more, and whilſt he ſtaid with me I gave myſelf up to other ſubjects. We ſpoke

of the Count, whom I had left at ———; and of Ponthin, who had promiſed to ſee me again.—" I am impatient to know that young man," ſaid Werter—" I am ſure he has taſte, and of that kind which fills my ſoul, or he would not have diſtinguiſhed Eleanora." I took my lute, and played a tune to ſome words of Werter's compoſing—They were of that gentle turn, which diſtinguiſhes a timid lover at the approach of his miſtreſs; and the laſt lines expreſſed the rapture of his heart when he perceives he is beloved. I ſung it with pathos—and Werter was moved—his compliment had ſunk deep into my heart, and I had no other way of thanking him for it. But after all,

my

my dear friend, what is it that I am about? Perhaps I cannot determine—or I will not. What I am ſure of, is, that Werter has honor, and that though he may be now deceiving, he will never betray me. No; I know him ſo well, that I am certain he would ſhrink with the ſame horror I ſhould, even from the appearance of guilt. I may then truſt him as the protector of my fame!—But my heart—Ah! time only can diſcover that!

END OF VOL

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